

CHAPTER 4

NAVAL FUNERALS AND CHAPEL WEDDINGS

“The Navy is not a job, it is a way of life.” The significance of this statement is exemplified by the unique customs, honors, traditions, and special ceremonies which surround all naval funerals and chapel weddings.

The primary purpose of the duties performed by the Religious Program Specialist on these occasions is to support and assist the chaplains as they conduct religious rites and ceremonies for naval personnel and their families. In addition to an understanding of the religious rites, an awareness of the significance and meaning of naval customs and traditions will enable Religious Program Specialists to serve more effectively in their role of support to Navy chaplains.

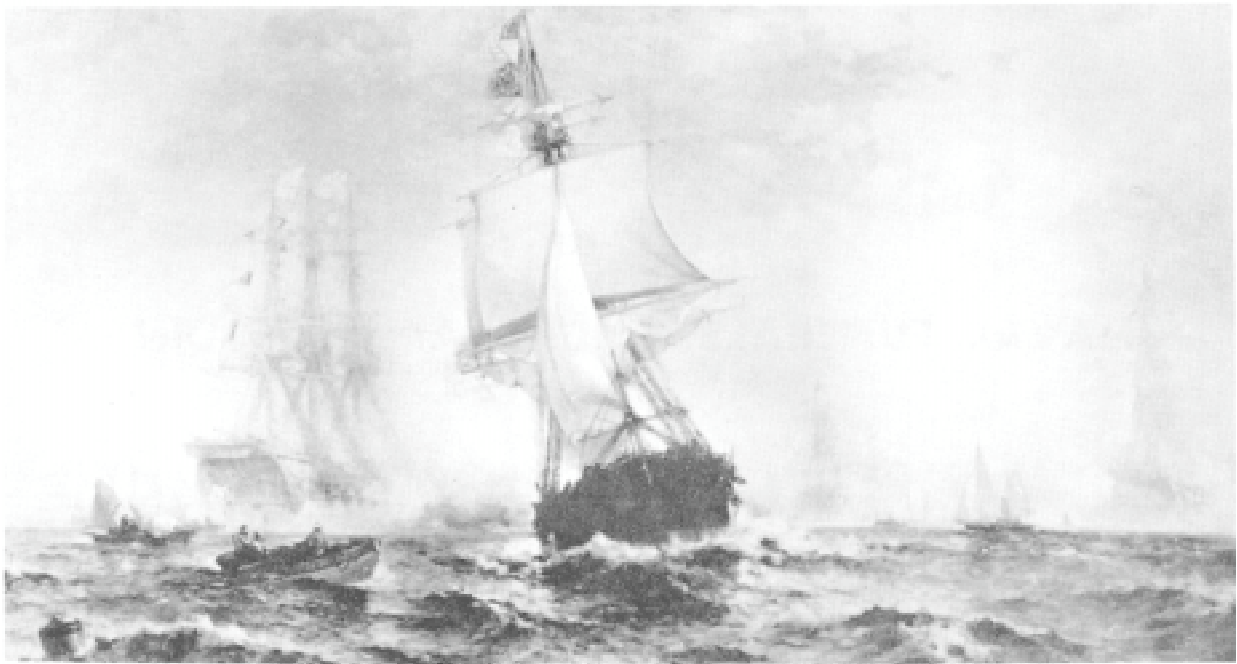
Before naval funerals and military weddings are discussed in detail, it is important to note some elements of naval customs and traditions which play an important part in these ceremonies. The significance and origin of naval customs which relate to military funerals and weddings can be traced back to the American Revolution and the formation of the Continental Navy. Some of the customs which have been passed down to the present-day Navy and, in time, will be passed on to future generations are presented in the following paragraphs.

The national ensign or flag of the United States of America represents our nation. John Paul Jones is thought to have been the first military commander to fly the American flag when it was first flown aboard his vessel, the *Ranger*, in Portsmouth, NH on July 4, 1777. Sailing for France on November 1, 1777, Jones again flew the Stars and Stripes aboard the *Ranger*. At the same time, Jones carried word of the Battle of Saratoga to Benjamin Franklin, who was the American emissary in

Paris. Entering Quiberon Bay, on February 14, 1778, Jones found the French fleet in roadstead (figure 4-1). As the *Ranger* sailed in at sunset with the American colors flying, the French saluted with “nine guns”—official recognition by the Royal French Government of the new American Republic. As a result of this gesture, Britain handed France an ultimatum and the French responded by joining the new American Republic in its war of independence against the British. Following this historical event, the American flag became the primary symbol of the United States and has had a central place in both civic and military ceremonies since that time.

Our national ensign is always handled with great care and dignity. The union (the stars) of the flag is considered to be its point of honor. No flag or pennant is ever placed above the ensign of the United States except during Divine Services conducted on board ship by chaplains. When Divine Services are being conducted, either the Christian or the Jewish pennant, as appropriate, may be flown above the national ensign.

When displayed in the chancel area of a Navy chapel, the national ensign should be to the right of the chaplain as he faces the congregation. When the ensign is to cover the casket of a member of the naval service, its “union” should be placed at the head of the casket over the area of the deceased member’s left shoulder (figure 4-2). During burial, the flag must not touch the ground nor be lowered into the grave. The ensign of the United States, when placed over a deceased member’s casket, acknowledges that the member served the nation and its naval service. Navies of other countries permit the sword, the cap, and the chapeau to be placed upon their national flag when it is draped over a



*John Paul Jones in the **Ranger** receives the first salute to the Stars and Stripes, Quiberon Bay, France, 14 February 1778.*

*Extract from the Continental Congress
Journal, 14 June 1777*

“RESOLVED, That the Marine Committee be empowered to give such directions respecting the Continental ships of war in the river Delaware as they think proper in case the enemy succeed in their attempts on said river.

“RESOLVED, That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation. “The Council of the State of Massachusetts Bay having represented by letter to the president of Congress that Captain John Roach, some time since appointed to command the Continental ship of war Ranger, is a doubtful character and ought not to be entrusted with such a command; therefore

“RESOLVED, That Captain John Roach be suspended until the Navy Board for the eastern department shall have enquired

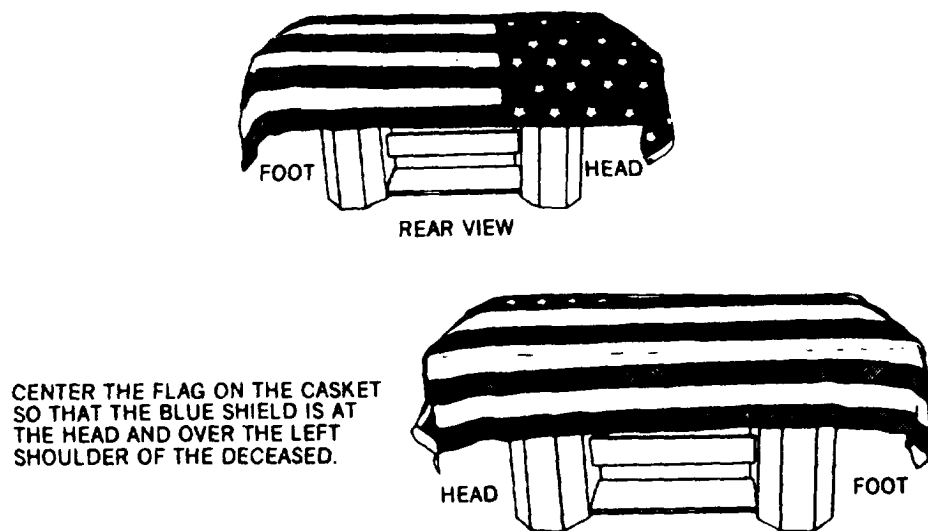
fully into his character and report thereon to the Marine Committee

“RESOLVED, That Captain John Paul Jones be appointed to command the said ship Ranger.”



The First Stars and Stripes.

Figure 4-1.— History, heritage, Navy.



287.4(M1)

Figure 4-2.—Correct method of displaying the flag with the casket.

casket; however, nothing is ever to be placed atop a casket which is covered with the ensign of the United States. Our national ensign combines blue to symbolize vigilance, justice, and perseverance; white to symbolize purity; and red to symbolize hardiness and valor. Use of the flag signifies patriotism and the spirit of the American nation.

The sword is a symbol of authority. At a naval funeral, the deceased officer's sword may be leaned against the casket and/or may be placed in the casket at burial. The sword of John Paul Jones, the Father of the American Navy, rests near his marble sarcophagus (figure 4-3) in the crypt of the Naval Academy Chapel.

The sword should NOT be unsheathed in a naval chapel. At a military wedding ceremony for a naval officer, it is customary for the ushers in uniform to form an arch of swords outside the doors of the chapel under which the newly wedded couple passes.

Three volleys are fired into the air at a naval funeral as an act of respect for the deceased member and the naval uniform.

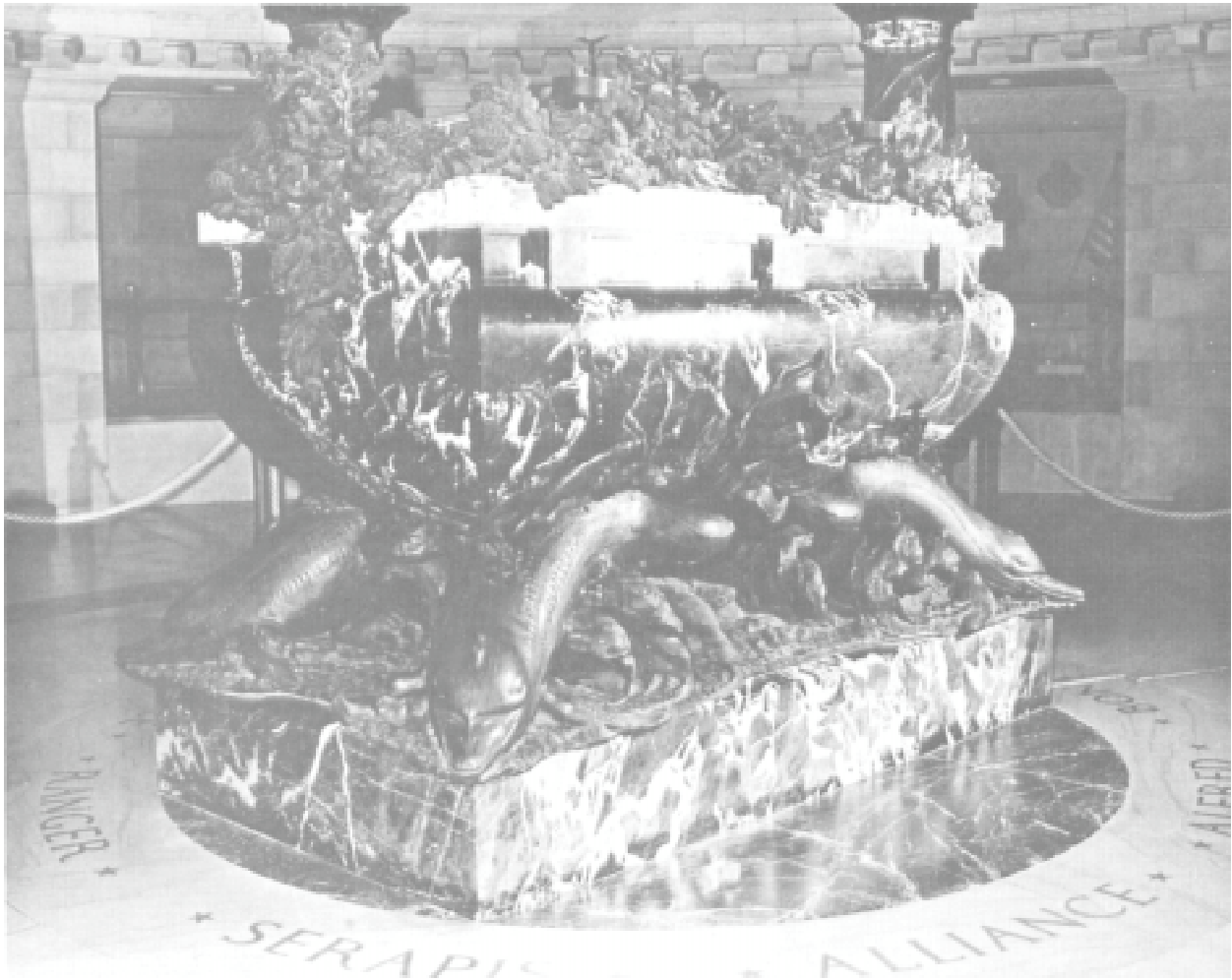
Taps, the last post, is sounded as a signal that the service of the deceased member has ended and that the time for rest has begun.

The reversed arms are an acknowledgement that war is a sign of human failure to maintain the peace.

The reversal of rank is an acknowledgement that at death all persons are equal. This form of "the last shall be first, and the first shall be last" is carried out in the recessional and processional in the placement of the honorary pallbearers.

The personal salute is a tradition that was carried over from the British Royal Navy. The salute is the first part of the movement of uncovering (figure 4-4) which was the order promulgated by Admiral, the Earl of St. Vincent, which stated that all officers were to take off their hats when receiving orders. In the early American Navy, one might touch and hold a lock of hair in the absence of a cover. Today, the salute is a significant military gesture of respect within the naval service. This gesture of respect is rendered in deference to the naval uniform and to the flag. The national ensign, placed over the body of a deceased member of the naval service, is rendered a salute on the occasions listed in *Naval Funerals*, NAVPERS 15956B, and *Navy Military Funerals*, NAVPERS 15555.

These elements of naval customs and traditions have been presented to add flavor and



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Figure 4-3.-The crypt of John Paul Jones at the Naval Academy Chapel.

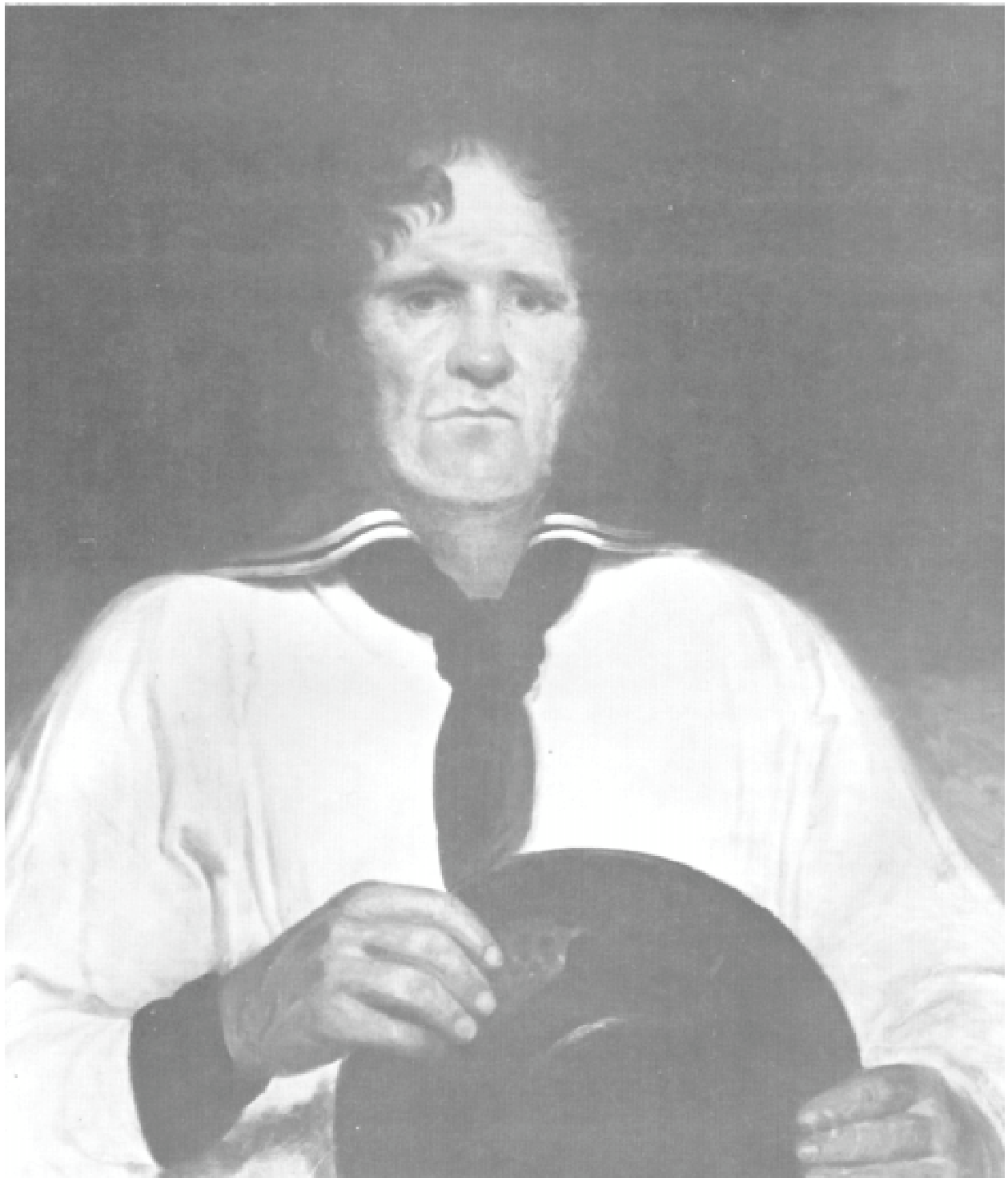
meaning to the military honors and ceremonies which are held in conjunction with the religious rites conducted by Navy chaplains. These religious rites and military ceremonies celebrate important events in the lives of Navy and Marine Corps members and their families.

The free expression of these rites and ceremonies is an affirmation of the freedom we enjoy as Americans and, as sea service members, are sworn to protect. OPNAVINST 1730.1, *Chaplains Manual*, Chapter 7, Rites, Ceremonies and Special Duties delineates the duties of the chaplain in regard to the ceremonies discussed here. Religious Program

Specialists should become thoroughly familiar with all aspects of this chapter of the *Chaplains Manual*.

STATE, OFFICIAL, AND SPECIAL MILITARY FUNERALS

State, official, and special military funerals are conducted in accordance with OPNAVINST 5360.1 series. When directed, *Armed Forces Full Honor* funerals are conducted by the Department of Defense. All other funerals for naval personnel are conducted in accordance



287.6(M1)

Figure 4-4.—Uncovering. . . a mark of respect.

	State	Official	Special Military	Armed Forces Full Honor	Special Full Honor	Full Honor (Company)	Full Honor (Platoon)	Simple Honor
* President of the United States	X							
* Ex-President of the United States	X							
* President Elect of the United States	X							
* Other persons designated by the President	X							
* Vice President of the United States		X						
* Chief Justice of the Supreme Court		X						
* Cabinet Members		X						
* Other Government Officials designated by the President of the United States		X						
* Foreign civil dignitaries designated by the President of the United States		X						
* Deputy Secretary of Defense			X					
* Former Secretary of Defense			X					
* Secretary of Army, Navy, and Air Force			X					
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff			X					
Five Star Generals			X					
Chief of Staff, U.S. Army			X					
Chief of Naval Operations			X					
Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force			X					
Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps			X					
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard			X					
* Other persons designated by the Secretary of Defense			X					
* Foreign military personnel designated by President of the United States			X					
* Former Deputy Secretary of Defense				X				
Former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (Not 5-Star General or Admiral)				X				
* Assistant Secretary of Defense				X				
* Former Secretary of the Army, Navy and Air Force					X			
Former Chief of Staff, U.S. Army; U.S. Air Force and Chief of Naval Operations					X			
* Under Secretary of the Army, Navy and Air Force					X			
Four Star General and Admiral					X			
* Assistant Secretary of the Army, Navy and Air Force					X			
Lt. General, Vice Admiral, Major General, Rear Admiral, Brig. General, Colonel and Captain						X		
Officers below grade of Colonel & Captain							X	
All other military personnel								X

* Not entitled to burial in any national cemetery by virtue of this position alone. See the Act of 14 May 1948 (62 Stat. 234, 24 U.S.C. 281) and AR 290.5.

Figure 4-5.—Types of funerals to which naval personnel are entitled.

with *Navy Military Funerals*, NAVPERS 15555. Figure 4-5 indicates the types of funerals to which naval personnel and other designated persons are entitled.

NAVAL FUNERALS

There are three general types of naval funerals. They are: Full Honor, Simple Honor, and Dependent funerals.

Full Honor Funeral

For the full honor funeral, a color detail and a ceremonial band are provided in addition to a specified escort. The band plays prescribed musical honors and/or a hymn during each movement of the casket. The color detail, band, and escort march in the procession and the casket is borne to the grave on a horse-drawn caisson.

Simple Honor Funeral

For the simple honor funeral, no color detail or band is provided and the escort does not march in the procession. The casket is borne to the grave in a hearse.

Full honor and simple honor funerals differ primarily in the size of the funeral escort. The basic elements of a full and simple honor funeral are:

- American flag draped over the casket.
- Honors rendered during each movement of the casket.
- The religious service.
- The procession to the grave.
- The graveside committal service.
- Honors rendered at the grave while three volleys are fired and Taps are sounded.
- Presentation of the flag to the next of kin by a Navy representative.

These basic elements described above form the foundation for all military funerals, whether

ceremonies are being conducted for an enlisted person or final honors are being paid at the grave of a flag or general officer.

Dependent Funeral

There are no military honors in connection with this funeral and no flag is provided. Normally, the casket bearer detail departs after placing the casket at the grave.

THE RELIGIOUS SERVICE

The religious services which are conducted as part of the military funeral ceremony may be divided into three categories.

- Military Funeral with Chapel Service
- Military Funeral without Chapel Service
- Military Funeral with only a Graveside Service

Each of the above services is described below in general terms. Specific duties of the RPs are noted as appropriate. The services may vary somewhat according to the religious beliefs of the deceased and the circumstances surrounding each funeral.

Military Funeral with Chapel Service

Prior to the funeral, the RP should ensure that the chapel is clean, in the proper order, and that all necessary materials are on hand and operable. The materials required should be reviewed with the chaplain in advance to ensure that nothing has been omitted. The arrangements of the altar or any other arrangements that are required should be made well in advance of the chapel service.

Before the service begins, the funeral escort is formed in line facing the chapel entrance. The band forms on the flank toward the direction of march.

Normally, members of the immediate family, relatives, and friends of the deceased should be seated in the chapel before the casket is processed. For Roman Catholic funerals, the body precedes the mourners into the chapel. The RP



287.7(M1)

Figure 4-6.-The Chapel Service, St. Andrews Chapel, U.S. Naval Academy.

or chapel ushers should ensure that a sufficient number of front seats on the right side of the chapel facing the altar are reserved for the immediate family.

The two front pews on the left are reserved for the honorary pallbearers. If body bearers are used to carry the casket into position inside the chapel, seats should be reserved for them in the rear of the chapel.

The conveyance bearing the remains to the chapel should arrive a few moments before the time set for the service. Since the casket normally is covered with the national colors, the escort is called to attention and the escort commander salutes as the conveyance arrives.

When all is in readiness to move the casket into the chapel, the escort commander brings the escort to "Present, ARMS." At this command,



287.8(M1)

Figure 4-7.— Departing St. Andrew’s Chapel, U.S. Naval Academy at the conclusion of the chapel service.

the band renders honors. if a full honor ceremony is being accorded, followed by a hymn. At the first note of the hymn, the casket is removed from the conveyance by the body bearers and carried into the chapel. As soon as the casket enters the chapel, the band ceases to play. The escort is then brought to order and given “At Ease.”

When honorary pallbearers are present, they are formed in two ranks, facing each other, thus forming an aisle from the conveyance to the entrance to the chapel. At the first note of the music, and while the casket is being carried between them, the honorary pallbearers uncover or salute as appropriate. They follow the casket in a column of twos into the chapel and sit in the front pews on the left.

The funeral director, or designated person, moves the bier (figure 4-6) as previously prescribed by the officer in charge. If there is no bier, the body bearers carry the casket as instructed beforehand.

At the conclusion of the chapel service, the body bearers follow the honorary pallbearers. If there are no honorary pallbearers, the body bearers follow the chaplain in a column of twos as the casket is moved to the entrance of the chapel. When honorary pallbearers are present, they form an aisle from the entrance of the chapel to the conveyance (caisson or hearse) and uncover or salute as prescribed.

When the casket appears at the entrance of the chapel (figure 4-7) at the conclusion of the service, the funeral escort and band repeat the procedures prescribed for entering the chapel. The band ceases playing and the escort is brought to order when the casket has been secured to the caisson or placed in the hearse.

After the casket has been placed on the caisson or in the hearse, the honorary pallbearers enter their cars. If they are marching, they form a column on each side of the caisson or hearse with the leading member of each



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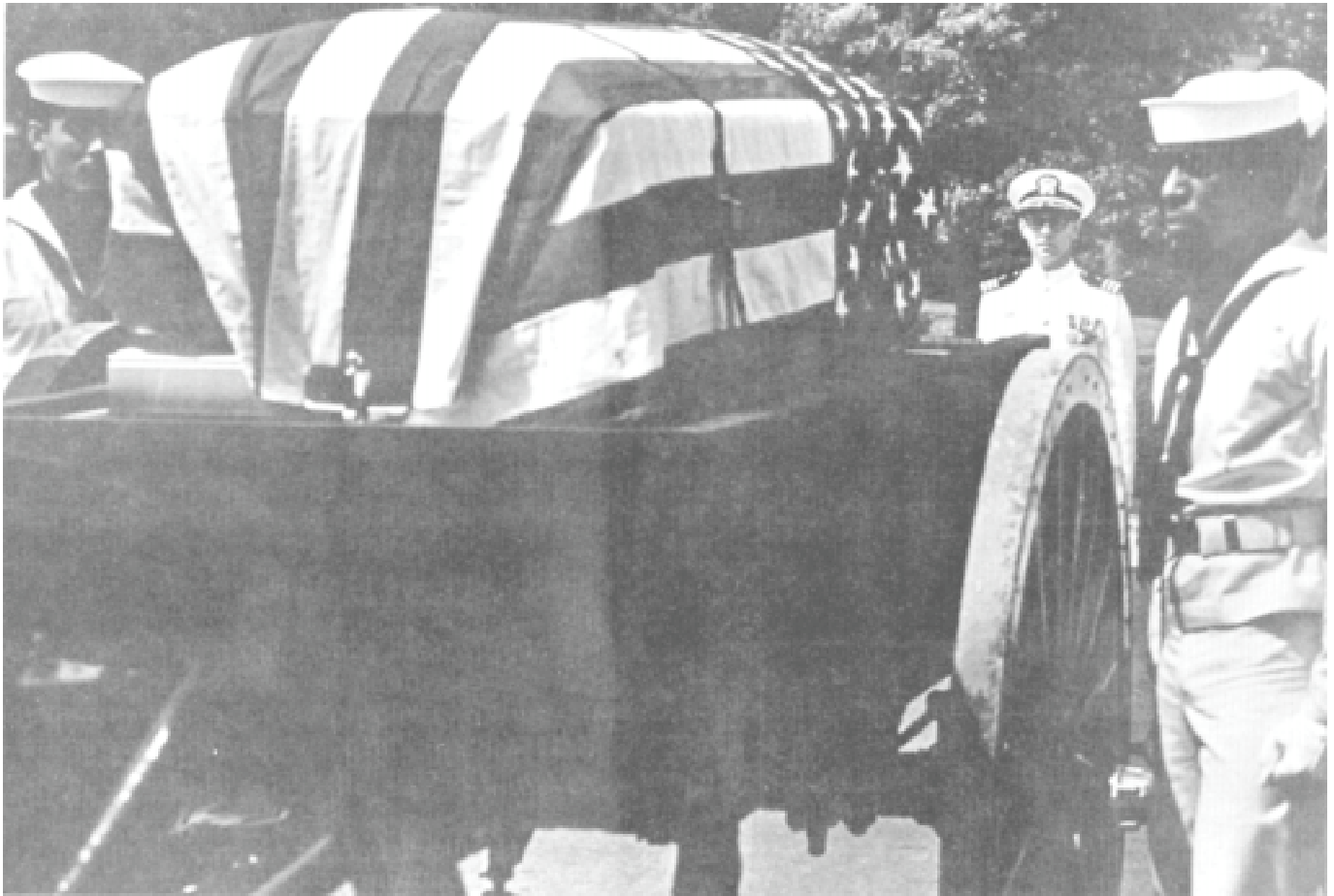
Figure 4-8.- Transfer of remains from the chapel to the gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery.

column remaining even with the front wheels of the conveyance.

The family group follows the casket out of the chapel and remains at the chapel entrance until the honorary pallbearers have broken ranks to take their position. The ushers then escort the family to their own cars. After the chapel service, the RP should restow all items of equipment used and return the chapel to a normal setting. Outside, the escort commander puts the band and escort in march, and the procession marches slowly to solemn music (figures 4-8 and 4-9). If the gravesite is a considerable distance from the chapel, the escort—after leaving the chapel area—may march “at ease” and in quick time, with no band music. Upon reaching the grave, the escort is brought to attention.

As the procession nears the grave, the marching elements move to their predesignated positions. The band and military escorts are formed in a line behind and facing the foot of the grave, with other marching elements placed as near as practicable. The firing squad is positioned in such a way that it will not fire directly over the heads of the mourners.

When the caisson or hearse comes to a halt, the honorary pallbearers again form in two ranks with an aisle extending from the conveyance to the graveside. If the grave is too near the road to permit this formation, the honorary pallbearers should take their positions at the graveside before the removal of the casket from the caisson or hearse.



287.10(M1)

Figure 4-9.- The proper placement of the casket upon the caisson while en route to the graveside.

When all is in readiness to remove the casket from the conveyance, the escort commander orders, "Present, ARMS." At this command, the band renders honors, if appropriate, followed by a hymn. At the first note of the hymn, the body bearers remove the casket from the caisson or hearse. (See figure 4-10.)

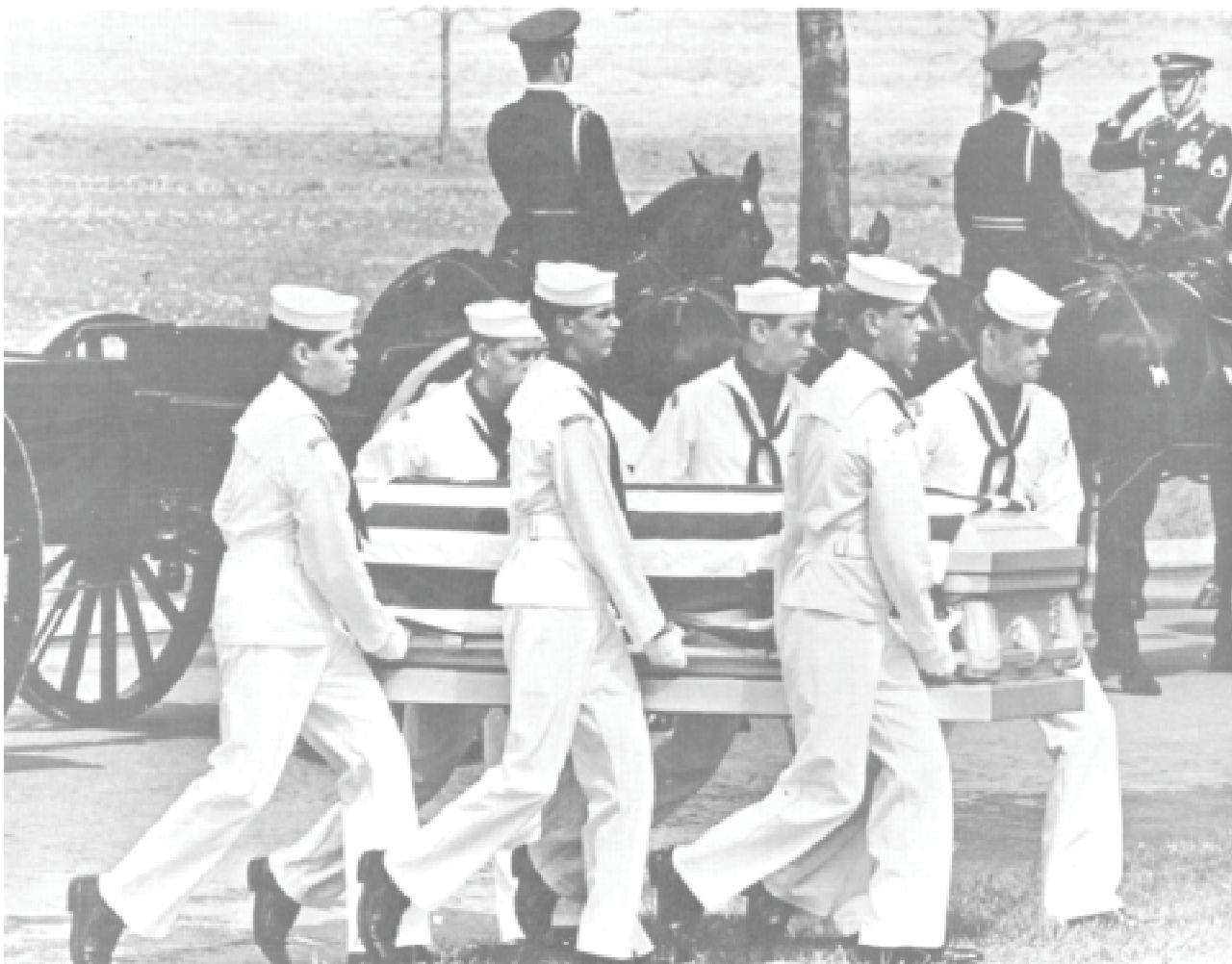
Preceded by the chaplain, the body bearers carry the casket between the ranks of honorary pallbearers to the grave and place it on the lowering device. The pallbearers remain in position facing the casket; then, they raise the flag from the casket and hold it in a horizontal position, waist high, until the conclusion of Taps.

As soon as the casket has passed between them, the honorary pallbearers face toward the

grave and follow the casket in a column of twos to their position at the grave. The family members proceed to their designated places.

When the casket has been placed over the grave, the band ceases playing and the escort is brought to order. The escort commander then commands, "Parade, REST." The graveside service is now conducted by the chaplain. (See figure 4-11.) After the conclusion of the graveside service, the chaplain moves two steps to the side or rear.

Upon the conclusion of the religious service, the escort commander brings the escort to attention. The escort commander orders, "Escort, less firing squad, Present, ARMS: Firing squad, FIRE THREE VOLLEYS." The firing squad



287.11(M1)

Figure 4-10.—Removal of the casket from the caisson by the casket bearer detail at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia.

fires three volleys; then, they assume the position of “Present, ARMS” on the command of the noncommissioned officer or petty officer in charge. They remain in this position until the conclusion of Taps, which is sounded by the bugler immediately after the last volley. The entire escort is then brought to order.

The body bearers box the flag; the senior body bearer gives it to the chaplain or commanding officer who presents it to the next of kin, or a representative of the family.

After the presentation of the flag, the band and escort are put in march by the escort

commander. When retiring from the vicinity of the gravesite, care should be exercised not to detract from the solemnity of the occasion.

It should be remembered that there are some differences among the chapel services conducted for full honor funerals, simple honor funerals, and dependent funerals. These differences are specified in Chapter 4, NAVPERS 15956B, *Naval Funerals* and NAVPERS 15555, *Navy Military Funerals*. A chapel service is appropriate and may be used for all full honor, simple honor, and dependent funerals .



287.12(M1)

Figure 4-11.-The Graveside service.

Military Funeral Without Chapel Service

When the funeral is without chapel service, the escort usually forms at or near the entrance to the cemetery. The officer in charge supervises the transfer of the casket from the hearse to the caisson (full honor) or makes provision for the hearse (simple honor) to be included in the procession, from the point of origin to the gravesite.

When honorary pallbearers are present, they form in a single line facing the caisson or hearse. Their order of march is the same as described in the Military Funeral with Chapel Services. While the casket is being transferred, the escort is brought to "Present, ARMS," the band plays appropriate music, and the honorary pallbearers uncover or salute as appropriate. The family and friends remain in their cars during the transfer of the casket. The funeral procession then forms and proceeds, as directed by the officer in charge, for the graveside service.

Graveside Service Only

The military elements (chaplain, body bearers, firing squad, and bugler) participating in a graveside service are in position before the arrival of the body. The procedure for the graveside service is basically the same as for all military funerals.

Upon the conclusion of the religious service, the leader of the firing squad gives the appropriate orders for the firing of three volleys and the bugler sounds "Taps" immediately upon completion of the last volley. The senior body bearer gives the order to march off after the flag has been presented to the next of kin.

DUTIES OF THE RP

The duties of the RP will vary according to the type of funeral—full honor, simple honor, or dependent; and the type of religious service—with chapel service, without chapel service, or

with graveside service only, if a religious service is to be conducted.

Duties will also vary according to the command at which the RP is assigned and the desires of the command chaplain; however, the duties of the RP will generally be as follows:

- Coordinate the schedule of the chaplain who is conducting the funeral service.

- Coordinate the efforts of the chaplain with those of the funeral director and the officer in charge.

- Initiate the necessary actions preparatory to the use of the chapel and the chapel staff in support of a military funeral in accordance with local instructions.

- Ensure the cleanliness and good order of the chapel and its associated items prior to and following the funeral.

- Lay out and restow the chaplain's vestments and any other items needed for the funeral service.

- Reserve pews for the immediate family and official participants for the funeral service in the chapel.

- Ensure the correct altar setting, if any, and ensure the proper placement of the bier for receipt of the casket.

- Position the funeral bier during the ceremony as requested by the chaplain.

- Perform other related duties as required by the chaplain.

General Information

The RF should obtain the following information in order to schedule and coordinate the chapel facilities and the staff used to support the religious and military aspects of a Navy funeral:

- Name, grade, SSN, and religious preference, if any, of the deceased member.

● Name, address, and telephone number of the next of kin.

● Name, address, and telephone number of the chaplain who will conduct the religious portion of the funeral service.

● Name, address, and telephone number (home/work) of the casualty assistance calls officer (CACO). Determine whether the CACO will attend the funeral service. If so, what will the duties and responsibilities of the CACO be regarding the funeral service?

● Name, address, and telephone number of the funeral director. The following information should be obtained from the funeral director:

a. Name and exact location of the cemetery and gravesite.

b. Time and date of interment services.

● Name, address, and telephone number of the officer in charge (OIC) of the funeral detail. The following information should be obtained from the *officer in charge:

a. What type of military funeral will be conducted?

b. What type of religious service will be conducted? (Worked out by chaplain and NOK)

c. Will honorary pallbearers be present?

d. What type of graveside service will be conducted (Volleys/Taps)?

e. What type of funeral procession to the grave will be used?

f. Will ceremonies be conducted by fraternal or patriotic organization following the military funeral service?

g. The approximate number of relatives and friends of the deceased who will be attending the chapel service.

BURIALS AT SEA

The burial at sea ceremony is one which remains fixed in the memories of most sailors who have participated in such a ceremony. It is one of the most somber ceremonies conducted at sea.

In earlier days, burial at sea was an absolute necessity when a death occurred on board a ship at sea. Today, it is seldom necessary to bury members at sea except in the time of war. Upon occasion, however, naval personnel who die ashore, or naval retirees request burial at sea. These requests are honored whenever possible. Such requests are submitted to the cognizant naval area commander for approval. If burial at sea is authorized, the date of burial will be determined by the availability of the naval vessel concerned.

The ceremony is composed of religious rites which consist of the reading of the scriptures, the prayers, the committal, and the benediction; and military honors which consist of the draping of the American flag over the casket, and the firing of three volleys after the Benediction, Taps, and the folding and presentation of the flag to the commanding officer who receives it in behalf of the next of kin.

Since burials at sea are ordinarily arranged in response to a specific request, a chaplain will generally be detailed by the fleet or force commander if the ship designated for the burial does not have a chaplain assigned. If a chaplain of the appropriate faith is not available, the religious services may be read by the commanding officer, or an officer designated by him.

CONSIGNMENT OF THE REMAINS TO THE SHIP

When death occurs on shore and permission for burial at sea has been obtained from the

* NOTE: If the OIC of the funeral detail is unable to provide this information, the questions should be addressed to the cognizant CACO or the NOK.

cognizant fleet or force commander, the cognizant naval activity or funeral director should ensure that casketed remains are consigned to ships in accordance with NAVPERS 15555, Article 2-5. It is the responsibility of the cognizant Naval Regional Medical Center (NRMC) to ensure that the casketed remains are properly prepared in a metal casket. The Naval Regional Medical Center should certify to the OOD prior to acceptance of casketed remains that a minimum of six 2-inch holes have been drilled into the base and lid of the casket to ensure the rapid entry of sea water. In the event the remains are encased in an innerseal casket, the Naval Regional Medical Center should also certify that the inner plate has been removed or sufficiently loosened to permit the rapid flooding of the casket. Additional weight may have to be placed within the casket by the NRMC or the funeral director prior to being transported to the ship in order to offset the natural buoyancy of the casket and to permit the casket to sink. The officer of the deck should determine whether the casket has been properly certified by the cognizant Naval Regional Medical Center prior to its acceptance and receipt on board for the burial at sea service. If, at the time of the burial at sea service, the casketed remains do not submerge upon impact with the water, the commanding officer of the vessel, while maintaining the dignity of the ceremony, shall take necessary measures to ensure its submersion. The casket should be retrieved and proper steps taken to ensure that it will submerge, then returned to the sea. Under no circumstances will gunfire be used to cause the casket to submerge.

In order to properly support and assist the chaplain in the preparation for the religious rites and military ceremonies to be performed, the RP should be familiar with the preparations that are necessary for a burial at sea; namely, the proper manner in which the casket should be handled upon receipt at the pier and aboard ship, the necessary preparations for the burial at sea ceremony, the proper conduct of the ceremony itself, and the person or persons responsible for each of these functions.

Documents Required

The following papers are presented to the officer of the deck of the vessel before the remains are taken into his custody:

a. The signed request and authorization from the person authorized to direct disposition of the remains.

b. A transit permit or burial permit issued by responsible civil authorities at the place of death, whether or not the remains are cremated.

An appropriate entry regarding the presentation of such papers, together with specific identifying data regarding them are made in the ship's log. After the burial, these papers are appropriately endorsed by the ship's commanding officer as to the fact of burial and forwarded to BUMED or the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) as appropriate.

Administrative tasks such as these are normally carried out or delegated by the ship's executive officer.

RECEIPT OF REMAINS SHIPBOARD

The officer of the deck takes custody of the remains when they are delivered to the ship. Eight body bearers are mustered and formed according to height on each side of the casket. The remains are carried aboard ship (figure 4-12) and placed in temporary quarters until the burial service begins. The casket is always carried feet first. The body bearers will be dressed in the uniforms specified for the service and will remain covered at all times while they are carrying the casket. Below decks, while not carrying the casket, the body bearers will be uncovered. In the compartment where the remains are temporarily placed, an honor guard will stand by the casket continuously until the remains are brought topside for committal.

While in the compartment, the encased remains are draped with the national ensign. The cap and sword of the deceased are not displayed on the casket when it is draped with the national ensign. The union of the national



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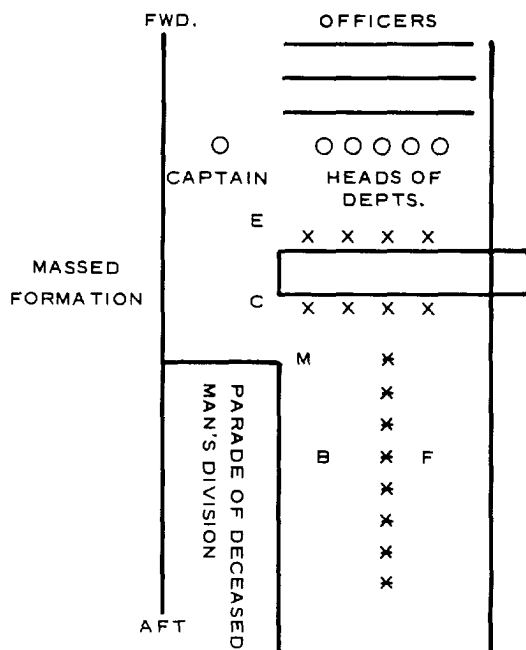
Figure 4-12.—The remains as they are carried on board ship.

ensign is placed over the head of the casket at the left shoulder of the deceased. The casket may be placed upon a board of suitable length and width which may later be fitted with cross battens underneath; these battens serve as handles. Low sideboards may also be utilized. When this is done, the casket should be securely lashed to the board and secured to the deck. The inport officer of the deck (OOD), the master-at-arms (MAA), or other delegated representative of the commanding officer will take custody of the remains and ensure that all necessary preparations are made and all appropriate honors are rendered. The honors that should be given during the ceremony itself are

prescribed in *U.S. Navy Regulations, 1973*.

PREPARATION FOR THE BURIAL AT SEA SERVICE

After departing from port and just prior to the ship's arrival at the area of committal, the place on the deck which is selected for the committal is cleared and rigged so that when the body is brought on deck it may be placed securely on a stand with feet outboard, at right angles to, and extending over the side of the ship. This preparation is normally made by the deck division under the guidance of the chief



LEGEND

- E = EXECUTIVE OFFICER.
- C = CHAPLAIN.
- M = CHIEF PETTY OFFICER.
- F = CPO IN CHARGE OF FIRING SQUAD.
- B = BUGLER.
- X = BODY BEARERS.
- x = FIRING SQUAD.

287.14(M1)

Figure 4-13.—Deck plan for the burial of the dead at sea.

master-at-arms. As the casket/remains are carried on deck for committal, "Attention" is sounded. The body bearers, preceded by the chief master-at-arms, carry the casket on deck. All crew members in the area stand at attention and execute a hand salute as the cortege passes on its way to the place selected for the committal. When the remains have been placed on deck at the committal site, the hand salute is terminated and a sentry is posted beside the casket until the burial service begins.

The service should not be conducted between sunset and sunrise, except under unusual circumstances. When it is necessary to bury the dead at night, such funeral services as are practicable will be conducted. Any part of the service

may be omitted as necessary except that the committal should be rendered if at all possible.

At the beginning of the burial at sea ceremony, the ship will be stopped if practicable. The ensign should be displayed at half-mast from the beginning of the funeral service until the remains have been committed.

A Guide to the Burial Service

The ceremony for burial at sea is carried out as follows:

a. The firing squad, body bearers, and bugler are stationed. A chief petty officer is designated to take charge of the eight riflemen who will fire the volleys. The chief master-at-arms directs the body bearers during the service until the flag is folded and delivered to the commanding officer. The assembled ship's company will respond to the orders given to the firing squad regardless of whether they are separately commanded.

b. Officer's call: The word is passed "All hands bury the dead," (The ship should be stopped and colors displayed at half-mast.)

c. Assembly (figure 4-13).

d. Adjutant's call: (Ship's company is still being assembled).

e. Ship's company (not on watch) is brought to parade rest.

f. Burial service (figure 4-14).

(1) The scripture (parade rest)

(2) The prayers (parade rest, heads bowed)

(3) The appropriate Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish committal is read (attention, hand salute) (figure 4-15).

After the committal is read, the body bearers tilt the board until the body slides along the board under the national ensign, overboard into